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DIRECT EDITION

*Dell'Otto
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X-FACTOR

IN A SOCIETY WHERE MUTANTS AND FORMER MUTANTS ALIKE FEEL THREATENED BY THE WORLD AROUND THEM, THEY TURN TO THEIR FIRST, BEST LINE OF DEFENSE. WHENEVER TROUBLE ARISES: X-FACTOR, THE PRIVATE DETECTIVE AGENCY FOUNDED BY MADROX, THE MULTIPLE MAN.



HAVING BEEN JUMPED AND ALMOST BEATEN TO DEATH BY AN UNKNOWN ASSAILANT (ALTHOUGH WE KNOW THAT IT WAS DAMIAN TRYB, JR.) SIRYN WAS TAKEN PRISONER BY DR. LEERY, A FORMER MUTANT WHO HASN'T EXACTLY TAKEN HIS DEPOWERING ALL THAT WELL. FORTUNATELY RICTOR, ALSO A DEPOWERED MUTANT AND A MEMBER OF X-FACTOR, USED HIS LACK OF ABILITIES FOR GOOD INSTEAD OF EVIL AND MANAGED TO SAVE SIRYN.

RICTOR HAS BROUGHT SIRYN BACK TO X-FACTOR HEADQUARTERS, LEAVING DR. LEERY TO HANG AROUND AT A LOCAL THEATER.

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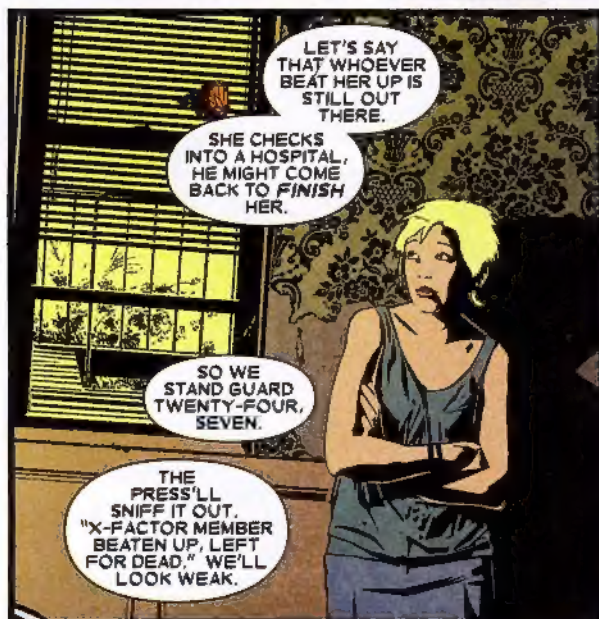
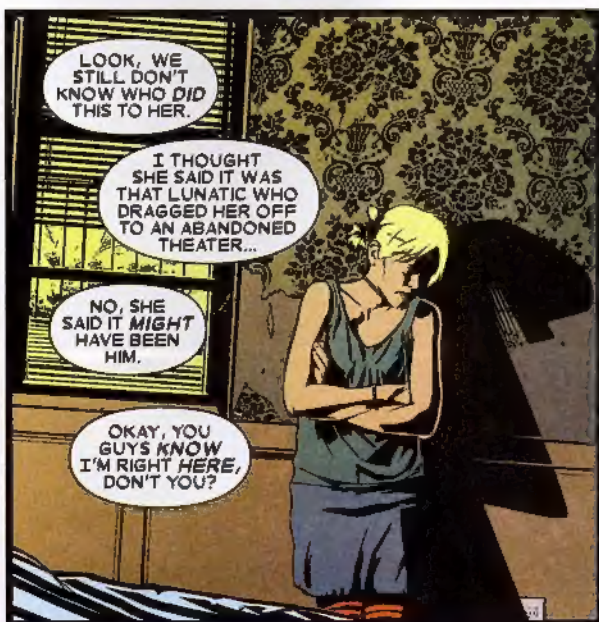
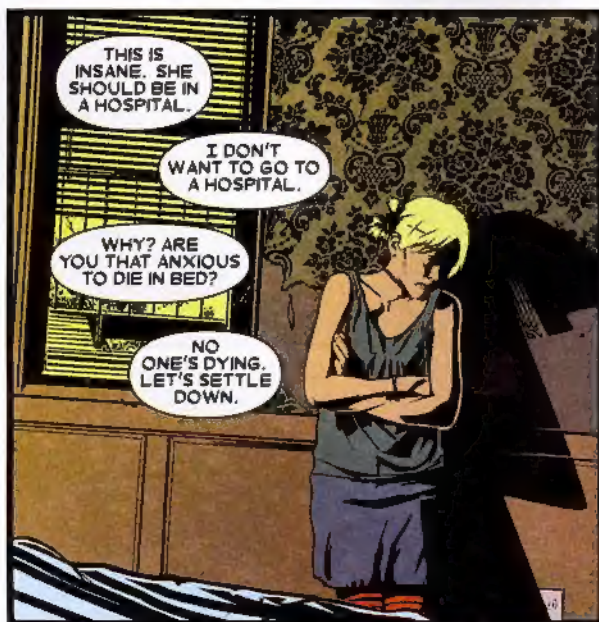
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I WAS WONDERING WHEN WE WERE GOING TO REACH THIS POINT. ASSIGNING BLAME. WASN'T SURE WHO WOULD TOSS WHAT WHERE.

BUT THIS ONE...WELL, I WASN'T EXPECTING IT. THINK I BETTER STEP IN...MAKE IT CLEAR WHO'S BOSS AROUND HERE.

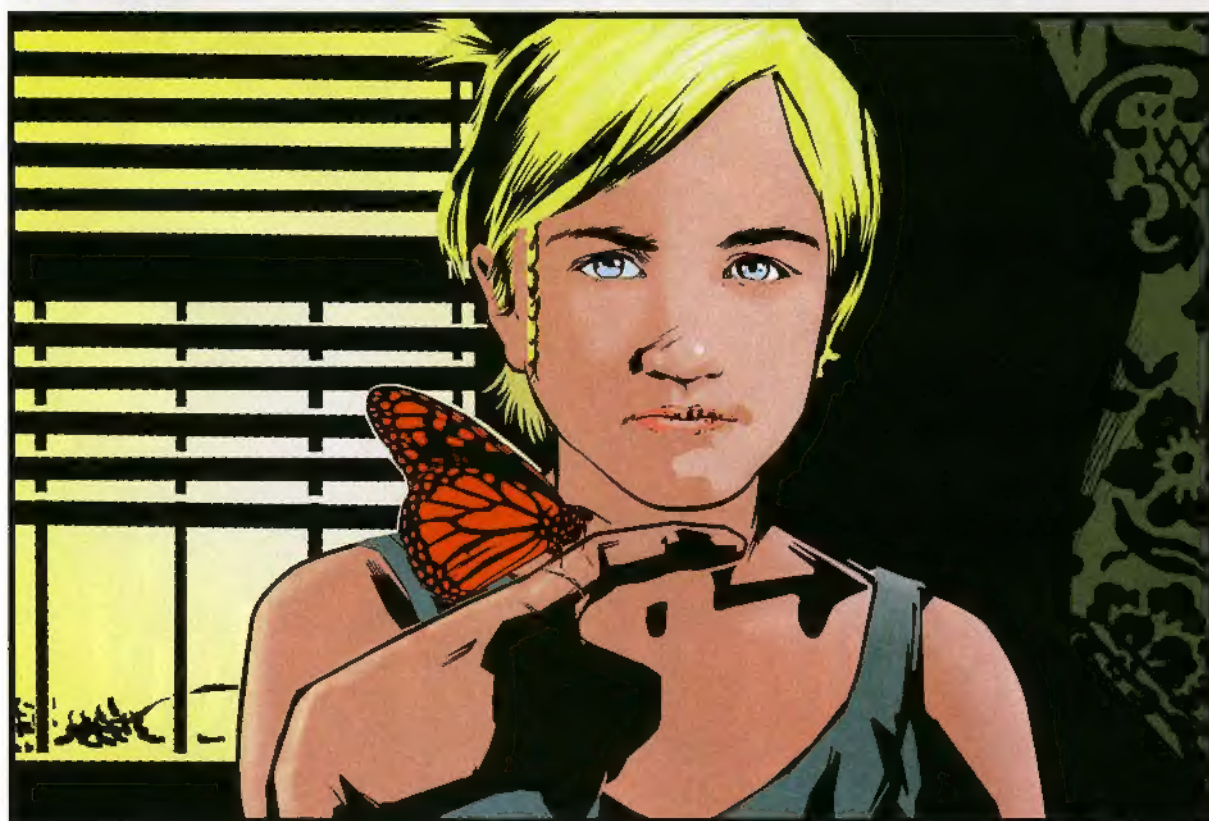
UH, RICTOR, I DON'T--

SHUT UP, MADROX.

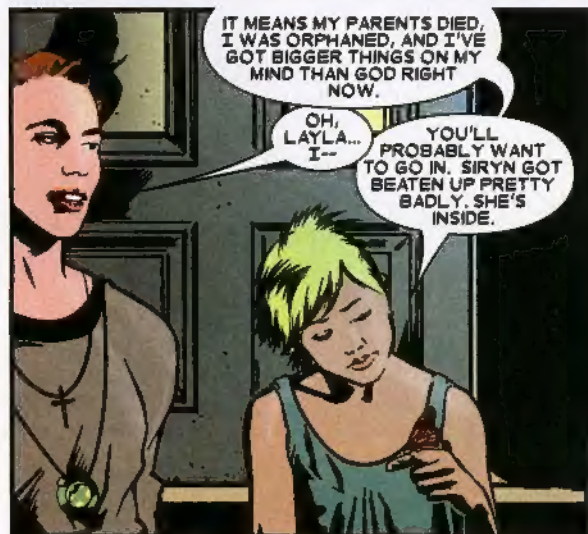
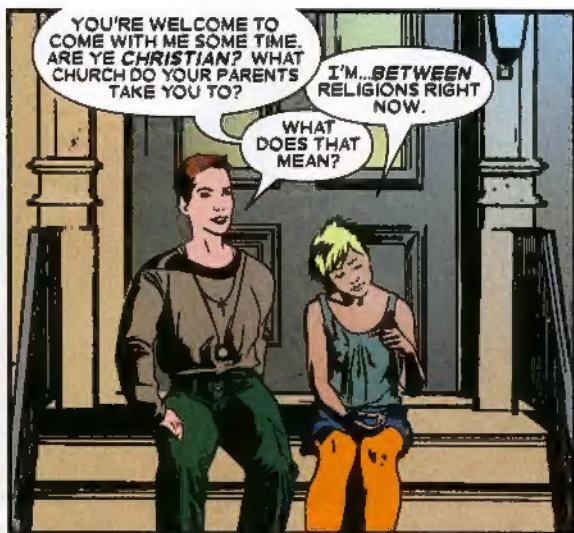
YEAH, OKAY, THAT WENT WELL.

The Butterfly Defect

PETER DAVID WRITER DENNIS CALERO ART
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ANDY SCHMIDT EDITOR JOE GUESADA EDITOR IN CHIEF DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER









WHAT ARE
YE SAYING? YOU
HURT SIRYN?

LAYLA!
WHAT ARE
YE--



LAYLA!
LAYLA
MILLER!

HELLO, MRS.
CHARNOFF.



LAYLA, THANK
GOD YOU CALLED
US! WE'VE BEEN SO
WORRIED!

THE
WAY YOU JUST
DISAPPEARED--!



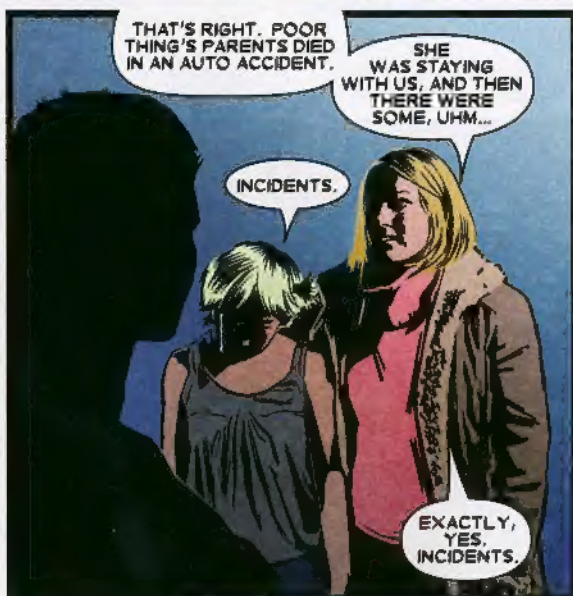
I DIDN'T
DISAPPEAR, MA'AM.
I RAN AWAY. BUT THE
NICE PEOPLE HERE AT
X-FACTOR LOOKED
AFTER ME.

RAHNE SINCLAIR,
THIS IS MRS. CHARNOFF.
SHE RUNS THE ST. JOAN
ORPHANAGE, DOWN ON
THE BOWERY.



I AM SO
RELIEVED!

AND I'M...
PLEASED FOR
YOU. BUT I DON'T
UNDERSTAND. LAYLA
WAS LIVING IN AN
ORPHANAGE?

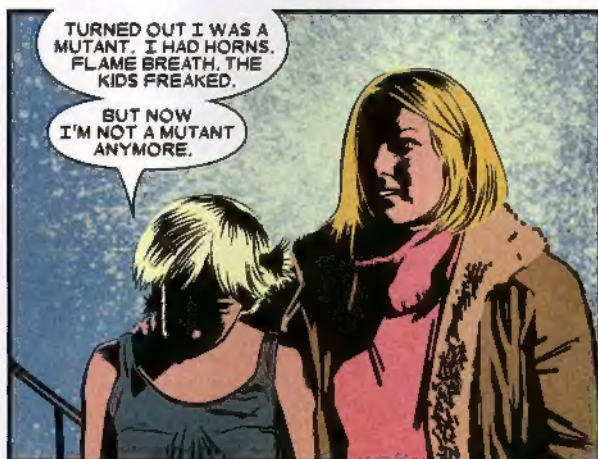


THAT'S RIGHT. POOR
THING'S PARENTS DIED
IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT.

SHE
WAS STAYING
WITH US, AND THEN
THERE WERE
SOME, UHM...

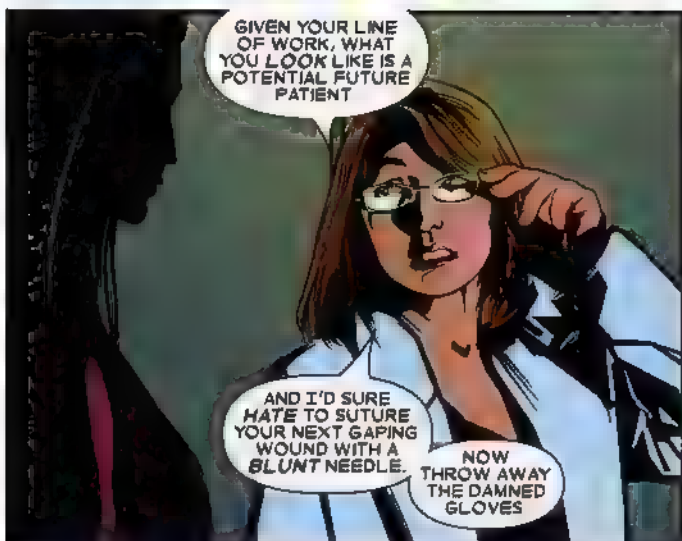
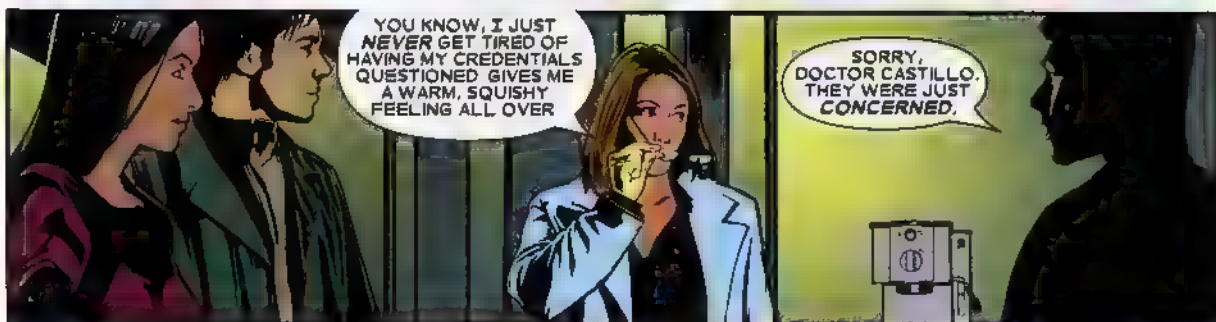
INCIDENTS.

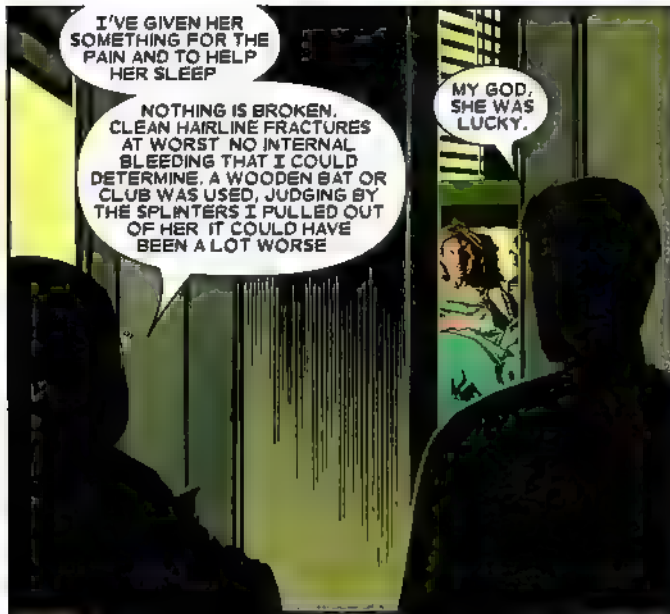
EXACTLY,
YES.
INCIDENTS.











I'VE GIVEN HER
SOMETHING FOR THE
PAIN AND TO HELP
HER SLEEP

NOTHING IS BROKEN.
CLEAN HAIRLINE FRACTURES
AT WORST NO INTERNAL
BLEEDING THAT I COULD
DETERMINE. A WOODEN BAT OR
CLUB WAS USED, JUDGING BY
THE SPLINTERS I PULLED OUT
OF HER IT COULD HAVE
BEEN A LOT WORSE

MY GOD.
SHE WAS
LUCKY.



YOU DON'T
GET IT, JAMIE THIS
WASN'T SOME GOON
POUNDING HER 'TIL
SHE STOPPED
MOVING

THIS GUY
KNEW EXACTLY HOW
HARD TO HIT AND WHERE
TO DO MAXIMUM DAMAGE
WITHOUT IT BEING
PERMANENT



AS BAD AS
THIS WAS...IT
WAS ONLY A
WARNING.

IF THEY
WANTED HER
DEAD SHE'D
BE DEAD.

JAMIE?



YEAH,
RAHNE,
WHAT?

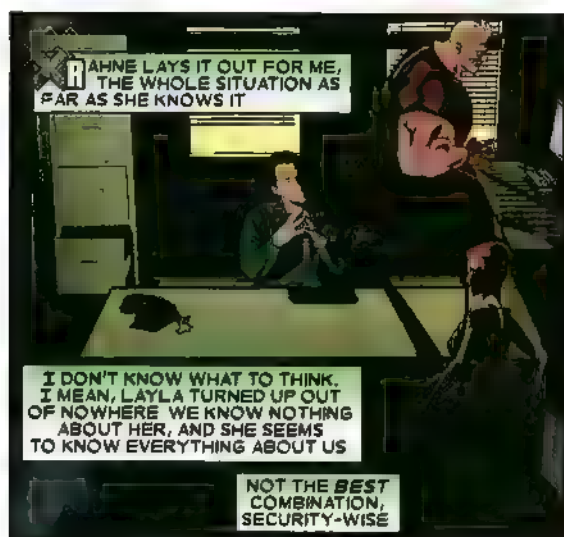
WE
NEED TO
TALK



THIS ISN'T
THE BEST TIME,
RAHNE. YOU CAN
SEE THAT--



NOW
ABOUT
LAYLA.



1 AHNE LAYS IT OUT FOR ME, THE WHOLE SITUATION AS FAR AS SHE KNOWS IT

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK. I MEAN, LAYLA TURNED UP OUT OF NOWHERE. WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT HER, AND SHE SEEMS TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT US

NOT THE BEST COMBINATION, SECURITY-WISE



BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HER...SOMETHING THAT MAKES HER BEING HERE SEEM

RIGHT

PERHAPS SHE DOES KNOW MORE THAN SHE'S TELLING. THEN AGAIN... WHO DOESN'T?



I THINK IT WAS SINGULARITY

WHAT WAS?

I THINK SINGULARITY INVESTIGATIONS BEAT THE SHOT OUTTA SY



WHAT DO YOU BASE THAT ON?

ON ACCOUNT'A ONE OF THEIR "FORMER" EMPLOYEES CAPPED SY'S INFORMANT WHEN SHE GOT TOO CLOSE.

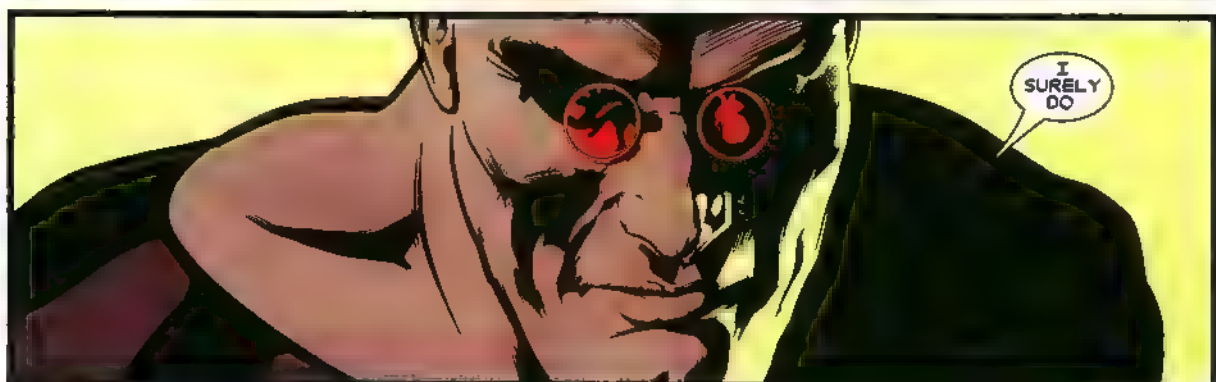
AND WE JUST TOOK DOWN THEIR MOVIE-STAR CLIENT, WHICH HADDA HURT.



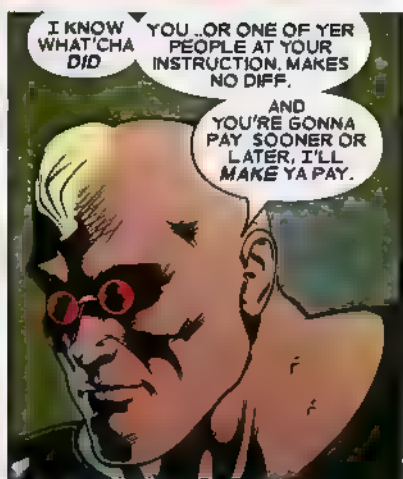
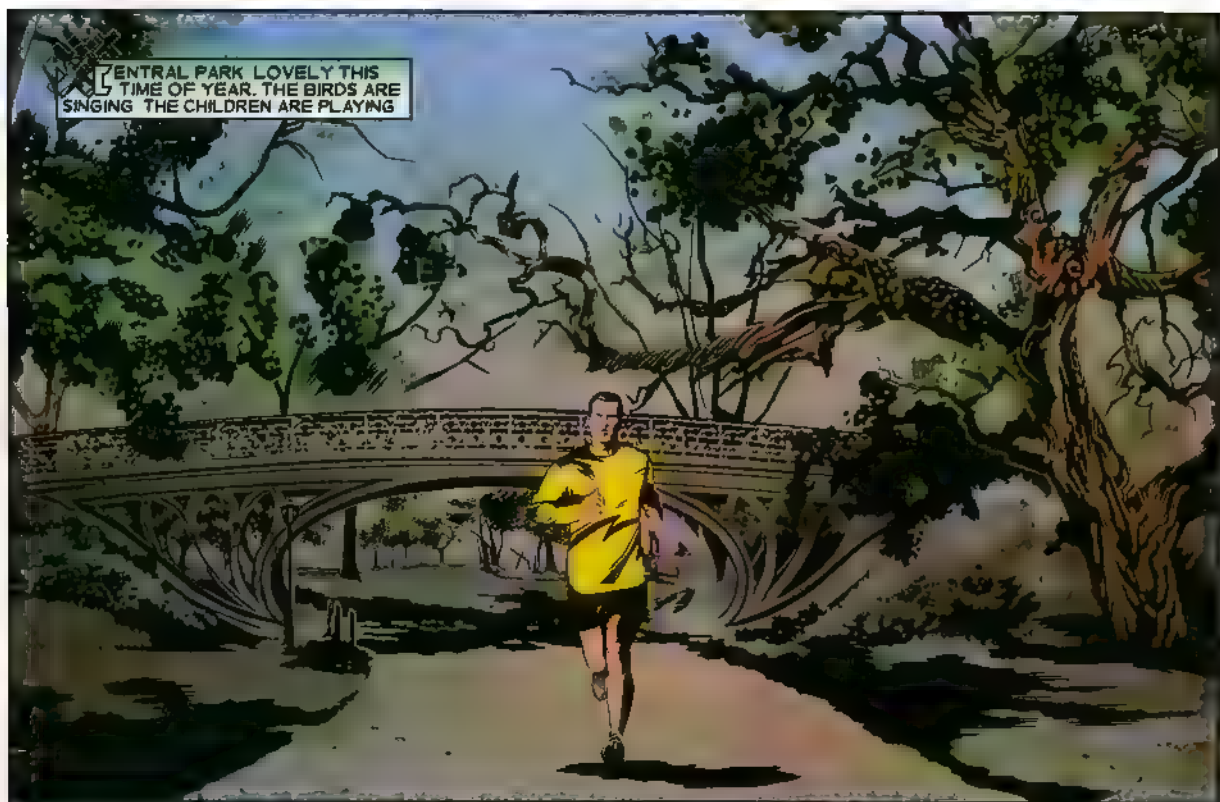
YOU THINK IT WAS PAYBACK?

I SURELY DO.

HAVE ANY THOUGHTS ON A REPLY?



I SURELY DO





OH,
REALLY.
TO EMBRACE
A CLICHE.

YOU
AND WHAT
ARMY?



FUNNY
YOU SHOULD
ASK.



IS FRACTURED AND HARD
TO REASON WITH AS MY
DUPES HAVE BEEN LATELY...

FOR SOMETHING LIKE THIS
FOR SOMEONE LIKE THERESA,
BEATEN WITHIN AN INCH OF
HER LIFE.

...WE CAN ALL AGREE THAT, AT THE
VERY LEAST, A WARNING MUST BE
METED OUT. VIOLENCE AGAINST ONE
OF OUR OWN GIVES US UNITY OF MIND.

WE MAKE NO MOVE AGAINST
TRYP. WE'RE NOT VIOLENT. WE'RE
NOT BEASTS AND WE'RE NOT
STUPID. IT'S BROAD DAYLIGHT.

YOU DON'T BEAT UP A
GUY IN BROAD DAYLIGHT
IN THE PARK IN FRONT OF
WITNESSES. BAD IDEA.



SO YE
JUST LET HIM
GO, THEN?

WE DON'T
KNOW FOR SURE
HE WAS THE ONE. IT
COULD HAVE BEEN
ANYONE WORKING
FOR HIM...

...ALTHOUGH
THE IDEA OF THE
BUCK STOPPING
WITH HIM SUGGESTS A
GOOD POUNDING
WOULDN'T BE OUT
OF LINE



BUT THERE'S SOMETHING
TO BE SAID FOR MAKING
HIM NERVOUS. PUSH HIM
TOWARD MAKING A
MISTAKE.

SHOULDN'T
HIS BEATING UP SIRYN
BEEN ENOUGH OF A
MISTAKE FOR HIM TO
MAKE?

I TOLD
YOU, WE
DON'T--

KNOW THAT
FOR SURE, RIGHT,
WHATEVER



THERE, UP
AHEAD. THAT'S
THE PLACE



LOOKS OKAY. IN A
DEPRESSION ERA CHIC
KIND OF WAY.

SHE'S AN
ORPHAN, JAMIE.
JUST LIKE YOU AND
ME. WE SHOULD
CERTAINLY BE ABLE
TO SYMPATHIZE

I DO,
I DO



BASED ON WHAT YOU TOLD
ME, I THINK WHAT HAPPENED
WAS, HER MUTANT POWERS
MANIFESTED A COUPLE
WEEKS...MAYBE EVEN DAYS...
BEFORE THE DECIMATION.

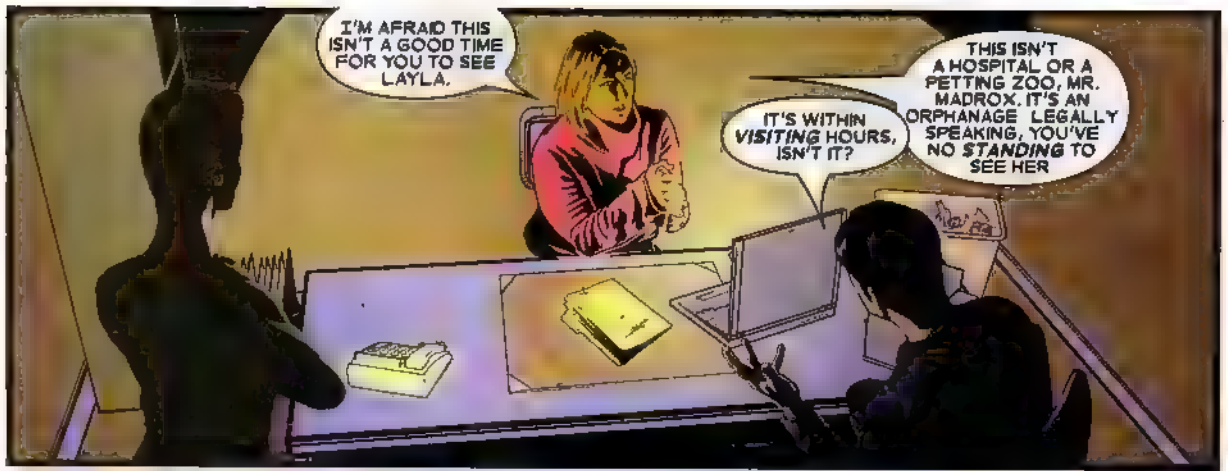
GIVEN TIME,
SHE MIGHT WELL HAVE
WOUND UP WITH XAVIER.
INSTEAD, HER POWERS
VANISHED

AYE, AND
SINCE SHE'S NO
LONGER A MUTANT,
THERE'S NO PLACE
FOR HER WITH
XAVIER NOW.



SO SHE
GETS ALL OF
THE MUTANT
HATRED...

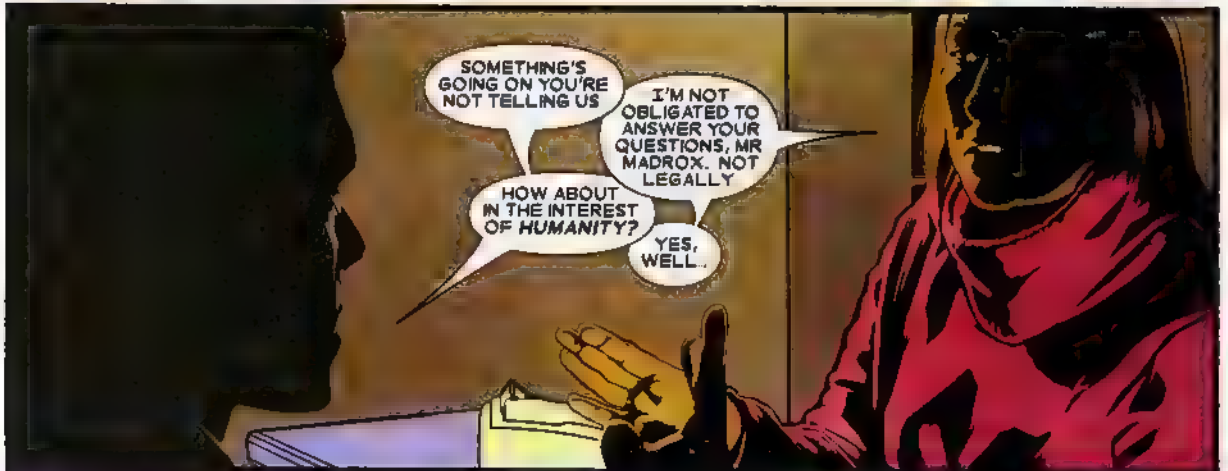
...AND NONE
OF THE PERKS.
NO WONDER SHE
HID WITH US



I'M AFRAID THIS ISN'T A GOOD TIME FOR YOU TO SEE LAYLA.

IT'S WITHIN VISITING HOURS, ISN'T IT?

THIS ISN'T A HOSPITAL OR A PETTING ZOO, MR. MADROX. IT'S AN ORPHANAGE. LEGALLY SPEAKING, YOU'VE NO STANDING TO SEE HER



SOMETHING'S GOING ON YOU'RE NOT TELLING US

I'M NOT OBLIGATED TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS, MR MADROX. NOT LEGALLY

HOW ABOUT IN THE INTEREST OF HUMANITY?

YES, WELL..



FROM WHAT I HEAR, YOU'RE NOT QUITE...HUMAN, ARE YOU



YE HEARD RIGHT



C'MON, JAMIE WE DON'T NEED HER AH KNOW LAYLA'S SCENT I'LL BRING YE RIGHT TO HER



SORRY. SHE GETS A LITTLE... TESTY.



I'LL GIVE WOLFSBANE CREDIT FOR ONE THING WHEN SHE WANTS TO GET SOMETHING DONE... BY GOSH, SHE GETS IT DONE.

I GO THROUGH LIFE TRYING TO BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE WHICH MAKES SENSE FOR A MULTIPLE MAN



RAHNE TEARS THROUGH LIFE WITH TEETH AND CLAWS AND SCOTTISH HARDHEADEDNESS I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO FEAR HER OR ENVY HER...

I OPT FOR BOTH



SHE'S IN HERE.



LAYLA! HEY!

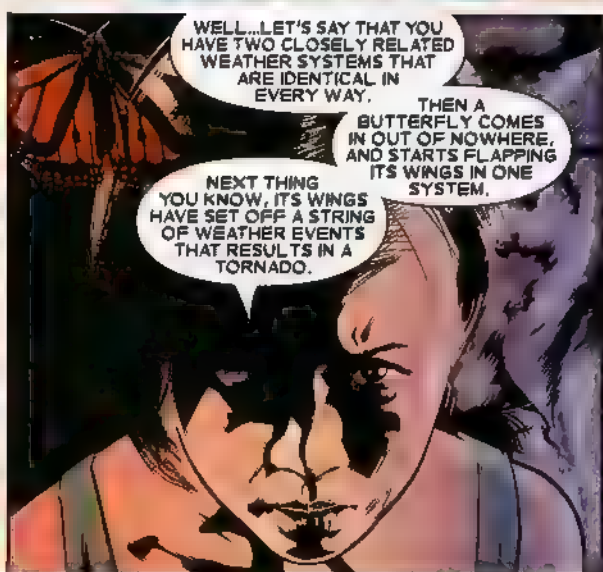
OH. HI, RAHNE

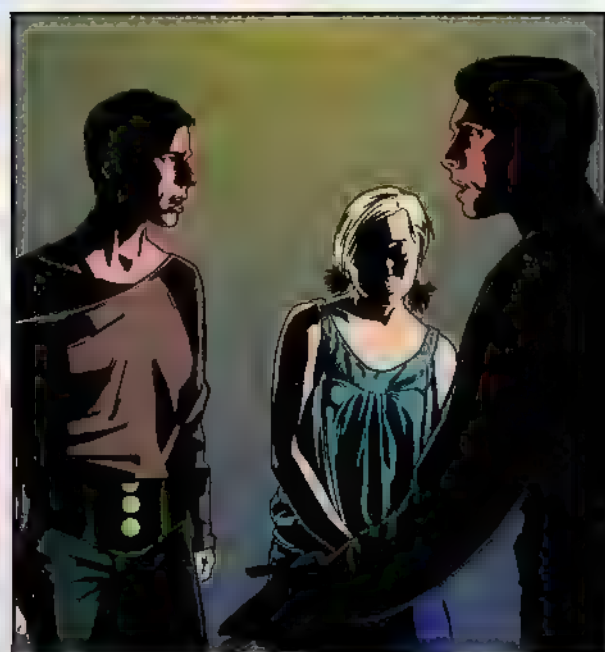
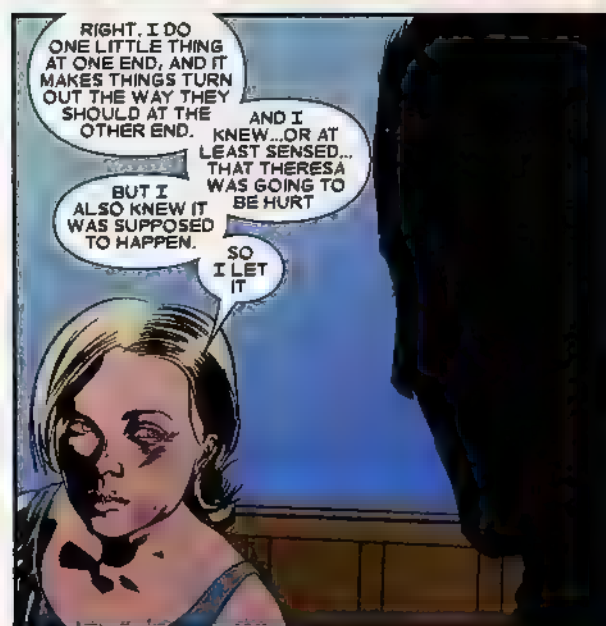
WE'RE JUST CHECKING IN WITH YE, TO...

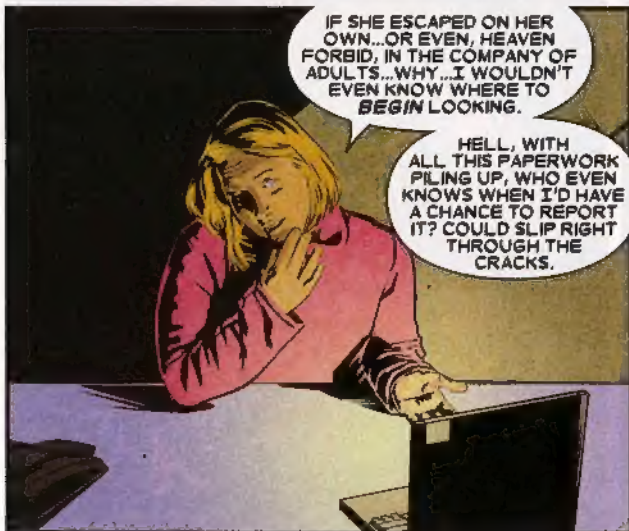


GODS.











X-FACTOR

Peter David here. The response to our humble endeavors continues to be largely positive and supportive, all of which is appreciated. What you can do, though, is get the word out. Don't get me wrong: Sales are rock solid. We're fine. But, in the words of the Brain, we want to take over the world. So let all the folks who restrict their mutant madness to the X-MEN titles know about what's shaking over here in Mutant Town. Because all the rave reviews and adverts in the world don't compare to the simple act of you putting a copy of the latest X-FACTOR in front of a friend's eyes and saying, "Dude, you gotta check this out." And after they read it and get hooked, they'll compliment you on your staggeringly good taste (which is great unless, y'know, your friend's a cannibal, in which case you really need some new friends. Best way to make new friends? Show them X-FACTOR.)

Let's rock. As always, letters may be edited for length, but meaning will not be changed.

Dear Mr. David:

This is regarding Mr. Tryp (Senior) making that snark that a three-hundred pound woman wearing floral spandex pants must have believed they looked good on her when she bought them in X-FACTOR #4. I am a 220-pound woman and I say that's hogwash. Setting aside the possibility that the 300-pound woman in floral spandex pants might have a Fat Admirer spouse/lover who wants her to dress that way, have you ever been in the fat ladies' section at the discount stores such as K-Mart and Wal-Mart? Have you seen the cheaper garments available in the Lane Bryant catalogs? If you don't have the money to buy something becoming, but expensive, you may have to settle for the Least Objectionable Garment That Was Available in Your Size & Price Range. (What is with those ugly big floral prints, anyway? Have the clothing designers decided that we're as big as furniture so we should be wearing something that looks as if it belongs covering a sofa???) I realize that we "fat chicks" can expect

to be the subject of jokes, but could you please try to make them less ill-informed?

Ann Nichols
Sierra Visata, AZ

Ann, not to put too fine a point on it, but if you're 220, then you should know that if you stand next to me, I'd make you look slim.

That said, I think you have to put something in perspective. You're voicing objections to dialogue uttered by a comic book villain. He's a bad guy. If you feel it was a hurtful comment, well, you're right...but he's supposed to be a hurtful individual. His dialogue is going to reflect that. If I write a member of the KKK making cutting remarks about Storm, am I required to have a disclaimer stating "The opinions expressed by the bigot in this story are his alone and may not reflect the opinions of the writer"? For that matter, should I—for instance—scale back Monet's cutting remarks because someone might feel one of her insults could apply to them?

I'm right there with you in the awareness that making fun of fat people is one of the last bigotries that appears to be "allowable" in our society without fear of remonstrance. But when I'm writing, the characters will say what they say, and if I start second-guessing the dialogue because I'm worrying about whom I'm going to offend—especially in villain dialogue—that sort of self-censorship is going to make the work less interesting in the long run.

So basically I'm asking you to be aware that when a character—villain or even hero, for that matter—says something mean-spirited or nasty, it's intended to be a reflection on the character, rather than a condemnation of some individual or group or necessarily the sentiments of the writer.

Dear X-Guys:

Wow, what an ending to issue 4, huh? Now the entire fandom of X-FACTOR can only wonder about one thing: How is Siryn's on-and-off boy toy (at least in

his eyes) Deadpool going to respond to finding out about his girl getting beat like that?

Richard Luckritz
(Via e-mail)

Richard, the two most asked questions I've been getting are: when is Deadpool going to show up and get involved with Siryn, and when is Shatterstar going to show up and get involved with Rictor. As if the book isn't crowded enough. You know what I should do? I should have Shatterstar show up and get involved with Deadpool. Piss off everybody in one shot. Think I wouldn't do it? Dude, I'm the one who had Marlo suck face with Moondragon. I can see it now--Shatterstar and Rictor in the story you've always wanted to see: "Brokeback Mutant." Andy? Could you set up a meeting with Joe Q? I've got a pitch for him...

- PAD

NEXT ISSUE:



MORE BAD NEWS FOR SIRYN!

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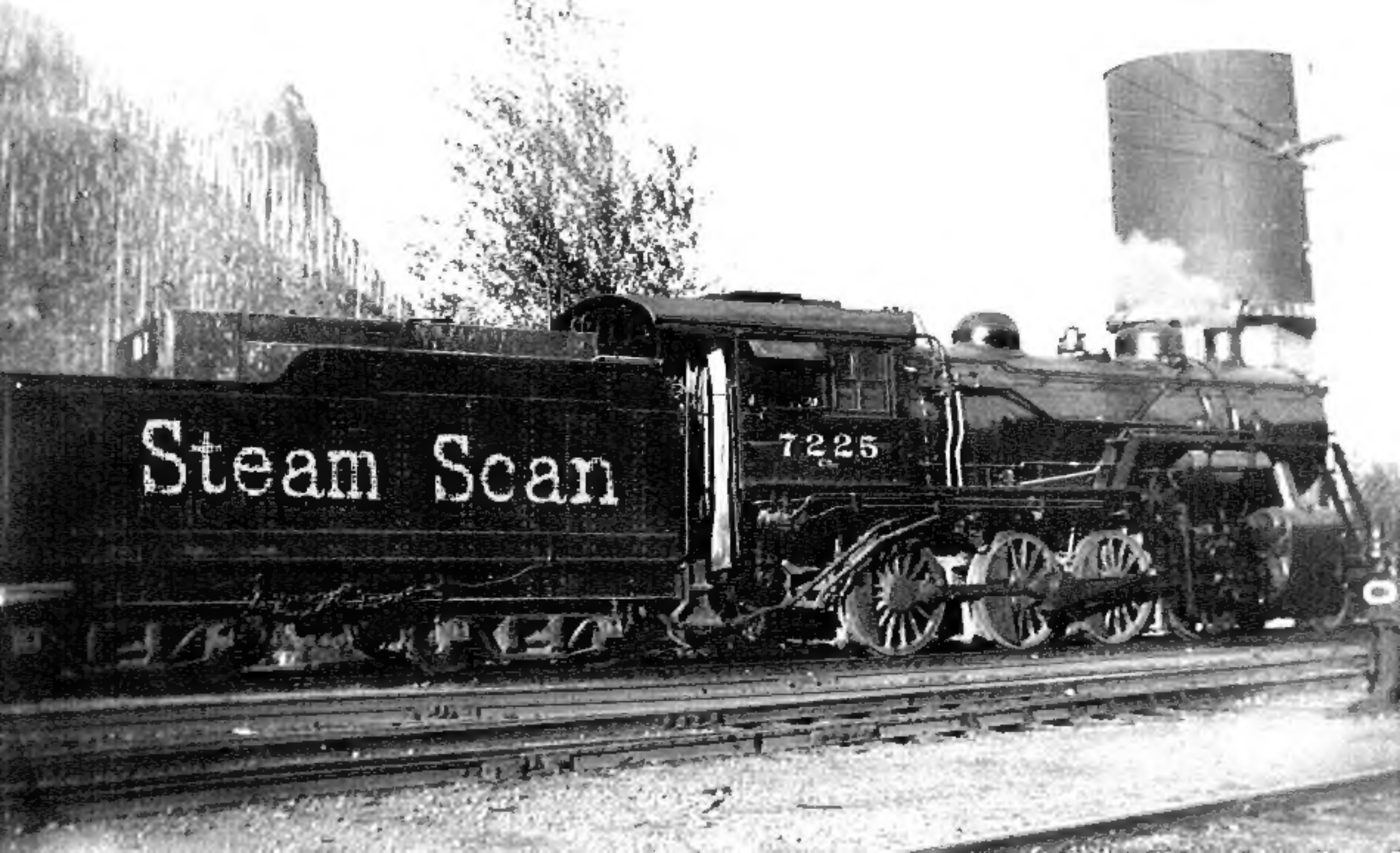
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